

TEAM REPORT OF FINDINGS

Concerning the Application from Valparaiso University for

**Authority to offer a course in Maine as part of a program leading to the
Master of Education and Master of Arts in Humane Education**

**March 12, 2015
Augusta, Maine**

The Valparaiso University Review Team:

Dr. Thomas Edwards (Team Chair)
Provost
Thomas College
Waterville, Maine

Dr. Joseph Atkins
Visiting Assistant Professor of Psychology
Coordinator of Multicultural Student
Programs and Support
Colby College
Waterville, ME

Ángel Martínez Loredó*
Higher Education Specialist
Maine Department of Education
Augusta, Maine

Dr. William H. Beardsley*
Observer
Maine State Board of Education
Augusta, Maine

*Non-voting participants

BACKGROUND

A Visiting Team appointed by the Maine State Board of Education met on March 12, 2015 to review the application of Valparaiso University to offer a three-credit residency component of their M.A./M.Ed. in Humane Education in Maine.

The team reviewed a self-study prepared by Valparaiso University and conducted a video conference with David Rowland, former Dean of the Graduate School at Valparaiso and current Executive Director of the Office of Institutional Innovation. The following individuals were also present during the video conference: Paige Mosher of the Office of Institutional Innovation at Valparaiso University, and Mary Pat Champeau and Sarah Speare, representing the Institute of Humane Education.

The Team was comprised of Dr. Thomas Edwards, Provost, Thomas College (Team Chair) and Dr. Joseph Atkins, Visiting Assistant Professor of Psychology and Coordinator of Multicultural Student Programs and Support at Colby College. Ángel Martínez Loredó, Higher Education Specialist, Maine Department of Education participated in the review as a non-voting member, as well as William Beardsley, Member of the Maine State Board of Education who served as the Board Observer, also in a non-voting capacity.

Standard A - Organization and Governance

Valparaiso University, located in Indiana, is appropriately organized and governed with an organizational chart that outlines the locus of control for academic programs within the University structure. The course offered in Maine is fully owned and administered by Valparaiso University within the current standing structure of university governance. The course offered in residence in Maine falls under the supervision of a full-time program director at Valparaiso University in Indiana who reports to the Chair of the Education Department, a unit of the College of Arts and Sciences, with additional oversight afforded by the Dean of the Graduate School because of the program's status as a graduate program.

Valparaiso University has an organizational chart outlining academic responsibilities as well as the appropriate Academic Catalog and Faculty Handbook, with responsibilities outlined for faculty, administrators and the Board of Trustees.

Valparaiso has the legal authority to operate and grant degrees in the state of Indiana and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

This Standard is Met

Standard B - Institutional Objectives

Valparaiso University is a “community of learning dedicated to excellence and grounded in the Lutheran tradition of scholarship, freedom and faith, [which] prepares students to lead and serve in both church and society” (*Valparaiso Status Report*, 3).

The University’s vision statement is to be “renowned worldwide for preparing women and men who are highly sought for their knowledge, character, integrity and wisdom.”

The institution’s statement of purpose is identifiable through its course and program offerings, including the program in Humane Education with its focus on social justice.

This Standard is Met.

Standard C- Degree Requirements

The Master’s programs in Humane Education consist of 33 credit hours and are delivered primarily online with the exception of the three-credit residency course offered in Maine at the Institute for Humane Education. Students complete a core set of 15 credits, the experiential component, credits toward thesis preparation and project, and electives.

Degree requirements and standards for course and program completion are clearly documented in the University Catalog and online.

This Standard is Met

Standard D - Admissions Requirements

Valparaiso University has a clear set of admissions requirements as outlined in the Graduate Catalog. Students must possess an undergraduate degree with a G.P.A. of 3.0 or higher and submit a reflective essay and letters of recommendation. Valparaiso has stated standards for non-native speakers of English. Admission to the program for Humane Education also requires an additional interview with one of the program faculty. The University offers the opportunity to transfer up to six transfer credits and does not recognize credit for prior learning. The Graduate Catalog contains information for the refund of tuition and fees.

This Standard is Met

Standard E - Academic Programs

The Master of Arts and Master of Education in Humane Education programs are consistent with the philosophy, purposes and objectives of Valparaiso University. The program has a clear set of learning objectives that are reflected in the program requirements. Students in the program are evaluated according to the Academic standards for the University as outlined in the Graduate Catalog. Courses and faculty are evaluated according to standard practice and policy of the University, and courses, descriptions and sequences are outlined in the Catalog. The residency component may be completed at any point in a student's program, while the online components are offered in a sequence for students. The course in Research Methods precedes the student's enrollment in the thesis proposal and writing and students are assisted in the identification of a thesis committee. Many students in the program come from the teaching profession and seek the M.Ed., while others seeking professional development and advancement may choose the M.A. degree.

A formal application for the degree triggers an audit by the registrar's office to ensure that students have met all degree requirements.

This Standard is Met

Standard F- Faculty

Faculty in the program are drawn from the Institute for Humane Education and all hold appointments as adjunct faculty at Valparaiso University. In this regard, all faculty must meet the uniform standards for appointment by the University, and they are reviewed and appointed by the University Department of Education. Three of the five current faculty hold master's degrees, while two possess doctorates. The program director is a full-time faculty member at Valparaiso. Thesis projects are overseen by a committee that includes a Valparaiso faculty member who holds a doctorate. Students pursuing elective credits within the program have the opportunity to access courses from other faculty at the University as well.

Faculty roles and responsibilities are outlined in the Faculty Handbook, and adjunct faculty are reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis. In addition to their teaching for Valparaiso University, the faculty from the Institute for Humane Education also offers additional programming and services outside of their teaching within the graduate program.

This Standard is Met

Standard G - Student Services

Valparaiso University fully owns the Humane Education residency program at the Institute for Humane Education in Surry, Maine which is directed by a full-time Valparaiso administrator. Students in the Humane Education program and in the residence program at the Institute for Humane Education are afforded services available to all Valparaiso students, including an academic adviser at Valparaiso and one at the Institute for Humane Education, access to online Career Center services, and support services consistent with standards in place for all Valparaiso students. The online Graduate Student Orientation is used to inform Humane Education students of support services, such as those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and recent enhancements to Title IX regarding sexual harassment and sexual violence prevention and response.

This Standard is Met

Standard H - Library and Learning Resources

Valparaiso University provides its academic programs and students with access to a library containing over 250,000 volumes and over 75,000 journals, over half of which in each category are available in electronic and e-text formats to all online students, including those in the Humane Education graduate program. Humane Education students have online access to the Graduate Tutoring Center and Writing Center that is consistent with resources available to all graduate students at Valparaiso.

This Standard is Met

Standard I - Facilities

Valparaiso University's supporting materials indicate that 30 of the 33 credits in the Humane Education master's program are offered in an online format which takes advantage of the University's online Blackboard program, which is supported by two dedicated positions in Instructional Design. The facilities at the Institute for Humane Education in Surry, Maine where Humane Education graduate students must spend a week in residency adhere to Valparaiso's industry standard for safety and maintenance and are fully insured by both the Institute for Humane Education's insurance and Valparaiso University's liability insurance policy which covers Valparaiso students studying at remote sites.

Valparaiso University acknowledges their responsibility to provide onsite orientation material for students in residency at the Institute for Humane Education, where Humane Education students will earn three program credits, with complete information about onsite support services, including compliance with American with Disability Act

requirements and procedures regarding compliance with Title IX requirements regarding sexual harassment and sexual violence prevention and response.

This Standard is Met

Standard J - Financial Resources

As part of its supporting materials, Valparaiso University provided their most recent audited financial statements outlining the financial position of the University. This information demonstrates that the University has the resources to support the delivery of the graduate program generally and the program offering in Maine specifically. The residential component of the program offered in Maine is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the appropriate responsibilities of Valparaiso and the Institute of Humane Education in delivering the program. The application indicates that current enrollment in the program stands at 37 with a projected increase to 45 for Fall 2015. Residency programs are limited to 15 students.

This Standard is Met

K. Telecommunications Instruction

The Master of Arts and Master of Education program in Humane Education is delivered predominately in an online format with the exception of the residential component in Maine.

Online courses at Valparaiso University are designed in conjunction with the University's Instructional Design staff. The University's application indicates that the current program has been recognized by the University as a VSOP, or Valparaiso Signature Online Program, a designation earned after review by that staff according to standards of best practice. Library, student support services and career services and advising, along with orientation materials are also provided in an online format.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Team found that Valparaiso University has the organizational, academic and financial resources needed to carry out the proposed residential course in Maine.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE MAINE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Review Team recommends that the State Board of Education approve the request from Valparaiso University to offer a three-credit residential component for its Master of Arts and Master of Education program in Humane Education in the State of Maine.